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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether context and other variables differentiated between improving and stable Louisiana schools. Participating were principals of 124 improving and 124 stable schools, with a final response rate to a mail survey of 69 percent. The School Improvement Survey, developed for this study, assessed six areas: (1) demographic and school characteristics; (2) basic school information collected by the Louisiana Department of Education such as faculty size and student daily attendance; (3) site-based management information; (4) external change processes; (5) internal conditions and potential for innovation; and (6) new initiatives for improvement. Among the major findings were: (1) there was a higher percentage of African American principals in improving than in stable schools; (2) improving schools with low SES student populations had the highest suspension rates; (3) principals of low SES indicated more shared decision making than those in middle SES schools; (4) more rural/town and urban fringe schools than metropolitan schools indicated that the goal of change is to make school a better place for children to learn, while more metropolitan schools indicated that the goal is to improve schools and professionalism; (5) there were more staff development programs initiated internally in the past 4 years in improving than in stable schools; and (6) there was greater district monitoring of the results of school improvement attempts in improving than in stable schools. (Eighteen tables delineate findings. An appendix contains the School Improvement Survey. Contains 69 references.) (KB)

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# Contextual Contrasts between Improving and Stable Elementary Schools in Louisiana

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## Statement of the Problem

### Education Reform in the U.S.

During the past fifteen years, the federal government and various private foundations have released many research reports describing the desperate need to improve the quality of public education (e.g., Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, 1986; Holmes Group, 1986; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). Because of these reports, the public has become more attuned to the idea of education reform, which in turn has led it to become a primary campaign issue for politicians seeking elective office. In reality, the result of this politicalization of education reform has been a cycle of campaign promises followed by a series of failed reform attempts (Cuban, 1990; Maxcy & Maxcy, 1993).

The latest government reform movement, Goals 2000 (U.S. Department of Education, 1994), is an initiative that established eight goals that all school districts in America should strive to attain by the year 2000. As with earlier reform initiatives, Goals 2000 has been viewed by many as a solution to the problems inherent in the public education system. Given the history of education reform (Cuban, 1990), the prospects for the success of Goals 2000 are not very promising.

Why has education reform failed? According to Astuto, Clark, Read, McGree, and Fernandez (1994), the basic cause of past failures to reform education is the lack of imagination by policymakers, education researchers, education administrators, and classroom teachers who develop reform proposals. These reform proposals have been based on ideas that are practical and feasible, but fail to consider the culture and social makeup of the individual school. "What we have experienced so far are practices and policies rooted firmly in a set of dominant assumptions that reflect orthodox views and conservative interpretations of the knowledge bases and practices of organizational studies, schooling, and education policy" (Astuto et al., 1994, p. 5).

Based on this idea, an alternative approach to reform and change in schools must take place. Astuto et al. (1994) contend that an internal culture exists in each school and consideration of that culture must be included in any school improvement effort. The reason many reform efforts fail is that school improvement plans often do not address the needs of the individual school.

Recently, some nationwide special strategies (e.g., Accelerated Schools, Restructuring) have incorporated context study within their models, such as Taking Stock in Accelerated Schools (Finnan, St. John, McCarthy, & Slovacek, 1996). Restructuring efforts also have begun to consider the need to address all aspects of the school's organizational life before improvement can take place (Chrispeels, 1992).

Definition of School Improvement

The term school improvement can be defined in two ways (Hopkins, Ainscow, & West, 1994). The first meaning relates to the interpretation of the term as a general effort to make schools better places for students to learn. Hopkins et al. (1994) provide a second, more technical interpretation of school improvement as follows:

> A distinct approach to educational change that enhances student outcomes as well as strengthening the school's capacity for managing change. In this sense school improvement is about raising student achievement through focusing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions which support it. It is about strategies for improving the school's capacity for providing quality education in times of change, rather than blindly accepting the edicts of centralized policies, and striving to implement these directives uncritically. (p. 3)

It is this second definition that marks the distinction between the early school improvement research and a new paradigm shift regarding school reform and change. Many researchers today feel that only by reassessing the internal processes of change in schools can there be any hope of successfully improving them (Gray, Reynolds, & Hopkins, 1994).

Assumptions about School Improvement

Roland Barth (1990) contrasts two approaches to school improvement derived from very different assumptions. He describes what he considers to be the dominant approach as follows:

1. Schools do not have the capacity or the will to improve themselves; improvements must therefore come from sources outside the school.
2. What needs to be improved about schools is the level of pupil performance and achievement, best measured by standardized tests.
3. Schools can be found in which pupils are achieving beyond what might be predicted. By observing these schools, we can identify their characteristics as 'desirable'.
4. Teachers and heads in other schools can be trained to display the desirable traits of their counterparts in high-achieving schools. Then their pupils too will excel.
5. School improvement, then, is an attempt to identify what school people should know and be able to do and to devise ways to get them to know and do it. (p. 38)

Barth (1990) then argues in favor of the opposite assumption about school improvement. He feels that school reform should be based on the abilities and desires of those that have the highest stake in the



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school: teachers, building administrators, and parents. These assumptions contradict those held by the "list makers" mentioned above:

1. Schools have the capacity to improve themselves, if the conditions are right. A major responsibility of those outside the school is to help provide these conditions for those inside.
2. When the need and purpose are there, when the conditions are right, adults and students alike learn and each energizes and contributes to the learning of the other.
3. What needs to be improved about schools is their culture, the quality of interpersonal relationships, and the nature and quality of the learning experiences.
4. School improvement is an effort to determine and provide, from without and within, conditions under which the adults and youngsters who inhabit schools will promote and sustain learning among themselves. (p. 45)

School Improvement in the U.S.

Complicating any attempt to synthesize the school improvement research literature is the fact that the attempts to develop school improvement as a science number in the thousands. Federal, state, and local efforts are constantly being introduced from a variety of theories, or in many cases from no theory at all. The history of school improvement in the U.S. has witnessed literally thousands of programs aimed at the school level, the teacher level, and the student level. School improvement efforts have been made through changes in the curriculum, changes in the delivery of classroom instruction, changes in the role of the administrator, and changes in the organizational makeup of schools as a whole. With so many different approaches to school improvement and so many programs attached to each approach, it would literally take thousands of pages to present a complete review of the school improvement literature. To condense this field, an outline presented by Sashkin and Egermeier (1992) was incorporated into this review. They have identified three broad perspectives on school improvement in the U.S. over the past 30 years, based on the research of Chin and Benne (1969) and House (1981). The three perspectives are each described as follows.

1. The rational-scientific perspective. The rational-scientific perspective dominated attempts to improve schools from the late 1950s to the 1970s. This perspective on improvement assumed that if people were given the necessary information to improve their schools, they would use it. One example of this perspective is the set of curriculum development and diffusion programs sponsored by the National Science Foundation (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

2. The political perspective. This perspective was prevalent in the many top-down, state level reform initiatives in the early 1980s, and was characterized by "strong external policy controls derived

through processes of bargaining and political compromise among power groups" (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992, p. 2). An example relevant to this perspective could be a state legislature enacting a law and expecting the schools to implement the law, or formally "waiving" certain regulations if the school can demonstrate that certain desired outcomes are being achieved.

McDonnell and Elmore (1987) describe four "policy instruments" used by states to bring about school improvement: (a) mandates; (b) inducements; (c) capacity building; and (d) system changing. Further evidence that this perspective on school improvement is currently making a comeback can be seen in the adoption by several states (i.e., Kentucky, Louisiana, etc.) of "school accountability" programs that offer "rewards and punishments" based on the performance of the local schools.

3. The cultural perspective. The cultural perspective emphasizes changes in meanings and values within the organization experiencing change. The culture changes because of the actions of leaders who "transform" their organization (Leithwood, 1992). Transformation, as a metaphor, implies that the culture of the school must change, since it is the old, bureaucratic culture that is stymieing change and preventing the school from improving. This idea reflects current approaches to the problem of change in the business sector (Moorman & Egermeier, 1992).

The attempts to implement school change across the three perspectives listed above are further divided into four operational strategies, by Sashkin and Egermeier (1992). Throughout the past 30 years, each strategy represents an attempt to incorporate one or more of the three perspectives. The four strategies are described below along with examples of attempts at implementation using the strategy.

1. Fix the Parts: Transferring Innovations

The focus of this strategy is the transfer and implementation of specific educational innovations. Programs can include specific curricular content, such as a new English textbook; or it may focus on practices, such as in-service programs to teach principals how to become instructional leaders. Therefore, the main idea is to fix the ineffective parts of schooling by implementing a new idea that will produce better results for students. This strategy is based almost entirely on the rational-scientific perspective.

Over the past 30 years many efforts, particularly federally funded efforts, have been undertaken to study and perfect the processes by which teachers and administrators learn of and adopt new programs and practices that lead to educational improvements. One study, a Rand Corporation study of four federally-funded programs that centered on 293 innovative projects revealed findings that were less than positive. The results showed that the money and effort invested in a project made little difference, nor did the specific project content matter. The study found that the innovations were often adapted and



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changed, not simply adopted, by users. Even when there were positive effects, they began to fade when the money ran out (McLaughlin, 1990). Related to the present study, McLaughlin (1990) observed that what mattered most was local capacity and will, thereby contradicting Huberman and Miles' (1984) call for maintaining the "fidelity" of the innovation.

Many programs involving distribution of innovations were particularly successful when various forms of additional assistance supported a program. One successful program was the Department of Education's National Diffusion Network (NDN) that disseminated curricula and programs to schools developed locally and have been proven to work. Emrick and Peterson (1978) noted that the evaluation of NDN determined that it was one of the few highly successful federal efforts to make wide-scale use of important developmental improvements.

While many reviews of innovation dissemination programs have been positive, House (1974) denounced the dissemination of the innovation approach, by detailing how the internal politics of school systems resist and defeat any external political, top-down force for innovation. However, he also correctly predicted that the federal government would continue to support this approach to improving schools, an approach that could not, in his view, succeed (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

Several attempts have been made to use a dissemination of innovations approach to affect "comprehensive" school-level change. Usually, the approach involved gaining acceptance and adoption of several school innovations, simultaneously, that will lead to change in the school as a "system." Four particular programs of this type include the Ford Foundation's Comprehensive School Improvement Program (CSIP) (Ford Foundation, 1972); the Experimental School Program (ESP) (Doyle, 1978); the Individually Guided Education (IGE) program developed at the University of Wisconsin's Center for Education Research (Klausmeier, 1990); and the effective schools approach (e.g., Bossert, 1985; Corcoran, 1985; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b).

The early 1980s witnessed the development of school change projects based on the effective schools research (e.g., Brookover & Lezotte, 1979; Brookover et al., 1984; Edmonds, 1979a, 1979b), which in turn led to a new type of research based primarily on the results from school change efforts in large cities (e.g., Clark & McCarthy, 1983; McCormack-Larkin & Kritek, 1982). A five-factor model for school improvement was widely proposed (e.g., D'Amico, 1982; Lezotte, 1982) based on the effective school characteristics in poor, urban elementary schools. School improvement studies as an area of educational research (e.g., Chrispeels & Pollack, 1989; Taylor, 1990) expanded when the federal government required the inclusion of the "correlates" of effective schooling (GAO, 1989) in improvement programs funded with Chapter 1 and 2 monies.

Results from the listed school-level improvement approaches undertaken as dissemination projects show that successful adoption of innovations is far more complex and costly a process than might have been expected. In summary, the "fix the parts" strategy has proven that even if an innovation is successfully transferred into schools, it may not be a catalyst for improvement (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

2. Fix the People: Training and Developing Professionals

The second strategy relied on the idea that school improvement is best achieved by first improving the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators, making them better able to perform their assigned roles (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992). This strategy reflects the rational-scientific perspective, but also incorporates the cultural perspective.

Most research under this strategy focuses on how to develop staff, rather than determining whether the "developed staff" improves the school. Fullan's (1990) work is an exception to this line of research in that he seeks to link staff development to institutional development. He identified three approaches to staff development: (a) staff development used to adopt innovations; (b) staff development considered an innovation in its own right; and (c) linking classroom improvement with staff development.

Levine and Lezotte (1990) concluded that ongoing, practice oriented staff development is more effective than the traditional "one-shot" in service training programs that are so common. Stedman (1987) described several elements involved in ongoing, practical staff development at unusually effective schools: (a) the training was tailored to specific needs of staff members and students; (b) demonstration lessons were given to inexperienced teachers; (c) inexperienced teachers were allowed to observe experienced teachers; (d) inexperienced teachers were allowed to observe experienced, effective teachers; and (e) videotapes of effective teaching practices were presented to teachers needing improvement.

3. Fix the School: Developing Organizations' Capacities to Solve their Problems

The third strategy is centered on the school as a social organization. This concept arose from a practice field called "organizational development" or OD. With OD, efforts are aimed to help people in organizations learn to solve their global organizational problems rather than dealing with problems that affect parts of the organization, or certain technical skills of individual organization members (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992). This strategy draws mostly from the cultural perspective described above, but it can involve one or two of the other perspectives as well. OD is an applied field with a substantial research and practice literature dating back more than 50 years (Sashkin & Burke, 1987). OD involves the

collection of data to identify problems and prescribe solutions to those problems, and also to evaluate how well those solutions actually work (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

In a review of OD in schools, Fullan, Miles, and Taylor (1981) recommend that it should only be used when a school or district meets certain "readiness" criteria (i.e., openness of communication; high communication skills; a widespread desire for collaborative work; and agreement about the educational goals of restructuring). Since this review, the number of schools and districts using OD has not grown significantly, but a variety of OD-based "school improvement models" have been developed.

One model that has been widely used is the "Onward to Excellence" (OTE) program developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) (Butler, 1989). The NWREL staff designed, tested, and refined a school improvement approach that creates a faculty-administrator team that learns to collect and analyze data to be used in a step-wise problem solving process. Teams from many schools are trained at the same time, but they receive very little assistance from outside experts (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

Butler (1989) has determined that the long term effect of OTE includes positive impacts on standardized test scores, but there are two significant weaknesses in the model. First, OTE-based approaches are not usually available, since NWREL has only trained a few hundred teams, while there are more than 100,000 schools in this country. The second weakness of OTE, according to Butler (1989) is the fact that the approach typically targets individual schools and not districts or entire states.

4. Fix the System: Comprehensive Restructuring

This fourth strategy for school improvement focuses on comprehensive school change or "restructuring." This approach goes beyond new techniques and innovations, better teaching and more effective administration of schools, and more effective problem solving at the school building level. Comprehensive restructuring encompasses the first three strategies in a new and broader context that extends to the community, the school district, state education agencies, professional development institutions, and even the national level, to focus specifically on cultural change (Sashkin & Egermeier, 1992).

Because the term restructuring has taken on the status of "buzzword" in the 1990s, there is a danger that the term will be so widely applied to so many different innovations that it will become meaningless. Also, there is not a clear set of research findings that indicate the success or failure of restructuring. According to McDonnell (1990), the present research knowledge is insufficient to establish a causal link between restructuring and student outcomes.

Although a comprehensive definition of restructuring is still vague, there are four components that seem consistently to appear in the literature when referring to restructuring. First, restructuring means decentralizing authority, devolving from the state level to the district level, then from the district level to the school building level, and from building administrators to the teachers to push the decision-making down to the lowest level in the system (Bailey, 1992). Site-based management (SBM) means more than delegating authority to the lowest possible level; also, it implies the existence of a coherent system. In such a system, roles and relationships between the school and the district, and the district and the state are not eliminated, but are changed in a fundamental way (David, 1989; Hill & Bonan, 1991). However, the change in authority may be made without affecting the teaching-learning core of schools (Taylor & Teddlie, 1992).

Secondly, restructuring involves a basic change in accountability. Timar (1989) cites the South Carolina approach as a successful example, in which the state required schools to provide remedial instruction to students functioning below grade level, yet left the organization of the program to the individual schools to develop.

This change in accountability relates to a set of changes in the "governance" of schools. Murphy (1990) calls these changes "voice and choice" and they involve three elements: (a) restructuring schools empower parents and community leaders; (b) they expand the school community by uniting parents, professional educators, businesses, universities, foundations, and the general populace; and (c) the notion of parental choice is thoroughly intertwined in discussions about transforming the relationship between schools and their communities.

International Efforts in School Improvement

Today, the role of school improvement research has taken on a decidedly international context, with much of the state-of-the-art knowledge being derived from projects such as the "Learning Consortium" (Erskine-Cullan, 1995), recent books concerning the merging of school effectiveness research and school improvement research (Gray et al., 1996), and the annual meetings of the International Congress for School Effectiveness and School Improvement (e.g., Hopkins, 1995; Houtveen & Osinga, 1994; Stoll, Harrington, & Myers, 1994; Stringfield et al., 1994; Townsend, 1994), where researchers from all over the world convene and discuss the issues of school improvement.

Hopkins et al. (1994) define "school improvement as a strategy for educational change that enhances student outcomes and strengthens the school's capacity for managing change" (p. 3). This definition views school improvement as a process that emphasizes the importance of strategies (school

improvement plans and programs) that have always been a keystone in school improvement research, but the definition also includes a component that addresses the school's internal conditions.

Improving the Quality of Education for All (IQEA) at the Cambridge Institute of Education, is a school improvement program that uses methods and strategies that are normally found in either school effectiveness research or school improvement research, to develop a program that will appeal to both the researcher and the practitioner. From this ongoing research, Hopkins (1995) presents ten components that should be a part of any school improvement plan.

1. Adapting external change for internal purposes. School improvement is not about how to implement external innovations in a more effective way. It is instead about how to use external reform ideas to "improve" or "develop" a school (Hopkins, 1995). This component is at the center of the present study of naturally occurring school improvement. Those schools that recognize the extent to which internally identified priorities coincide or overlap with external pressures are better able to respond to external demands from within.

2. Building partnerships. The evidence in school effectiveness literature suggests that schools are more successful when they are associated with a sense of identity and involvement that extend beyond the school (Hopkins, 1995). Whether this takes the form of university, intradistrict, or community-based partnerships, the best fit is what Hopkins (1995) calls "loose and tight." The tighter the school is about goals, the looser it can be about the means to achieve those goals.

3. Focusing on student learning rather than broad aims. While all schools have the broad goal of increasing the performance outcomes of its students, those that may be the most successful at managing school change begin with specific learning goals for their students (Hopkins, 1995). A strategy can then be developed to address those goals and attach an external change that will help them achieve those goals.

4. Establishing context specificity before designing the strategy. This is a key contribution that school effectiveness research has offered school improvement. The contextual situation in each individual school is different and calls for a diagnosis of the school's situation before introducing a change plan. Too many school improvement programs are adopted and implemented without any consideration of their own specific needs and organizational contexts (Hopkins, 1995). The individual character of the school and the will to improve will best be maintained when policies and priorities are controlled at the school level.

5. Planning strategically, not tactically. Hopkins (1995) describes a strategy as providing the framework for solving problems in development planning, and tactics as the detailed operational

activities required to put the strategy in effect. To achieve school improvement requires the establishment of a clear strategy, before agonizing over the tactics to use in implementing the strategy. He also warns against abandoning a strategy if a particular tactic does not work.

6. Building capacity - nurturing the conditions. Without capacity building, the substantive change becomes marginalized in a process that is, caused by a natural phase of resistance or "internal turbulence" (Hopkins, 1995). Without effective working relationships between members of the organization to overcome this resistance, the innovation may stall, the organization may begin to look for a new innovation and a cycle of failure then develops. With effective working relationships within the organization, the resistance is overcome by adapting or accommodating the internal conditions of the organization to meet the demands of the change.

7. Moving beyond case study - polishing the independent variables. "Unless we capitalize on naturally occurring experiments and use schools and classrooms as their own control, we will not make the conceptual and operational advances the field needs" (Hopkins, 1995, p. 270). Researchers are better defining the dependent variables (i.e., outcomes), so it is relevant now to try to determine which of the strategies (i.e., the independent variables) are actually affecting outcomes.

8. Developing appropriate research methods. The methods used in school improvement research (i.e., interviews, questionnaires, and observations) are very time consuming. The development of more user-friendly and comprehensive techniques for measuring the complex processes and relationships involved in mapping school change are needed (Ainscow, Hargreaves, Hopkins, Balshaw, & Black-Hawkins, 1994).

9. Differentiating school improvement strategies. School effectiveness literature has established that there are both positive and negative outliers in terms of their level of school effectiveness. The school improvement strategy that would be necessary to take a highly ineffective school to the level of a typical school, is different from the strategy necessary to take a typical school to the level of a highly effective school (Hopkins, 1995). When examining the various school improvement plans to determine which ones are affecting outcomes, it is important to establish a design that analyzes schools across effectiveness status to help determine which strategies are most effective with a particular type of school.

10. Theorizing about how schools develop. Schools develop by adapting external change to internal purposes through a process of structural and cultural accommodations. How structures influence cultures and vice versa is still a mystery. "There is also a need to distinguish between 'naturally occurring,' 'internally driven,' and 'externally supported' school improvement, and to define more clearly the characteristics of 'developing' and also 'effective' schools" (Hopkins, 1995, p. 273).

## Methodology

The research design for this study included the development of a survey instrument entitled *School Improvement Survey* (see Appendix), and the administration of that survey to a randomized sample of principals in improving and stable schools (Freeman, 1997). Data collected from these surveys were then analyzed using chi-square, MANOVA, and ANOVA procedures to determine if a significant difference existed between improving and stable schools across any of the survey variables. The study was purely exploratory in nature; that is, there were no a priori hypotheses. The research was guided by one research question (What context and other variables differentiate between improving and stable schools?)

The *School Improvement Survey* was developed using six different sources:

1. A set of principal demographic and school characteristic items, which were developed for the purposes of this study based on similar items from other surveys, designated as Dependent Variable Group 1 (DVG-1);

2. A set of relevant items taken from the *1993-94 Progress Profiles,* published each year by the LDE (Louisiana Department of Education, 1995), designated as Dependent Variable Group 2 (DVG-2);

3. A set of three items related to the three major areas of site-based management identified in a recent literature review of the restructuring field (Pol & Teddlie, 1996), designated as Dependent Variable Group 3 (DVG-3);

4. A set of 10 items developed for this study based upon the areas that Miles and Huberman (1984) used to characterize external change processes, designated as Dependent Variable Group 4 (DVG-4);

5. A set of 16 items adapted from a scale used in the UK for mapping change in schools (Ainscow et al., 1994), designated as Dependent Variable Group 5 (DVG-5); and

6. A set of five open-ended items developed for this study that allowed the principals to briefly describe new initiatives for improvement undertaken at their schools in the past four years, designated as Dependent Variable Group 6 (DVG-6).

Again, since the study was exploratory in nature and the survey instrument consisted of a collection of items assessing a variety of widely diverse areas, no validation study was conducted on the instrument. The face validity of the item subsets developed for this study (DVG-1, DVG-3, DVG-4, and DVG-6) was determined to be adequate based upon a review by five experts (three educational administrators, two professors in a College of Education).

The reliability and validity ratings for the items taken from the *1993-94 Progress Profiles* (DVG-2) were not reported by the LDE (Louisiana Department of Education, 1995). Despite this, these items are widely referenced, basic school information gathered by the LDE for more than 130 years. These data

were assumed to be highly reliable and valid measures of basic school characteristics (e.g., school population, faculty size, student suspensions, etc.).

The items for mapping change in school (DVG-5), also had no reported reliability and validity ratings (Ainscow et al., 1994). They were developed in the UK as part of a series of new, more user-friendly, yet penetrating techniques for investigating and measuring the complex processes and relationships involved in mapping the processes of school change. The development of these techniques involved four stages, including two field tests in UK schools participating in the IQEA school improvement project based at the University of Cambridge Institute of Education. While statistical evidence of validity and reliability of the techniques was not available, there was face validity for the items, evidenced by the fact that the techniques were incorporated into the data collection activities in the IQEA school improvement project (Ainscow et al., 1994).

In the current study, DVG-5 items were used to contrast schools designated as improving and stable. If significant results were found, then the instrument could be said to be discriminating between two groups that differ on degree of change in effectiveness status (one group stable, one group improving). If such results were to be obtained, then this would constitute a construct validation of the instrument.

The results for the quantitative analyses of the first five sets of variables are presented as a series of five separate MANOVAs (followed by univariate ANOVAs when appropriate) in Chapter 4. The five sets were analyzed separately because they contain such widely diverse items.

The responses to DVG-6 were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analyses consisted of chi-squares analyses of the frequencies of yes-no responses and are reported later in this paper. More detailed descriptions of each of the DVG sets are provided.

DVG-1

The items associated with DVG-1 are descriptive in nature, focusing on basic principal demographic information and school characteristics. The following list details the items found in this dependent variable group: principal's gender; principal's ethnicity; principal's age; principal's tenure at the school; principal's total tenure; number of new faculty members; change in attendance zone (yes, no); school departmentalization (yes, no); and participation in an external school improvement plan (yes, no). These items are numbered 1 through 3, 5 through 8, and 10 in Section I of the survey (see Appendix).

DVG-2

Although not included in the survey, certain other demographic variables were added to the data set of each school. As noted above, this information was gleaned from the *1993-94 Progress Profiles*

compiled by the LDE (Louisiana Department of Education, 1995). The data included numeric and percentage values for the following:

1. School population
2. Faculty size
3. Percentage of faculty with Master's degree
4. Percentage of student daily attendance
5. Percentage of student suspensions
6. Percentage of student expulsions

DVG-3

DVG-3 contained responses to three items seeking information about the degree of site-based management that principals perceive to be taking place in their schools. The three general topics are site-based management decisions concerning leadership, curriculum, and budget. These are the three major areas of restructuring, as identified in a recent literature review by Pol and Teddlie (1996). The items in DVG-3 were numbered 9A through 9C in Section I of the survey (see Appendix).

DVG-4

Also included in the survey was a list of 10 closed-ended questions related to seven areas associated with successful change in educational settings, according to Huberman and Miles (1984). These items were included to determine if change processes associated with external innovations differ in improving and stable schools.

Huberman and Miles (1984) summarized their findings regarding these seven areas as follows:

1. Setting - Innovations occurred when the school's district was reasonably stable and had at least a moderate past interest in new programs. (Huberman & Miles, 1984);

2. Motives and Attitudes toward Adoption - Huberman and Miles (1984) identified four motives for innovations: administrative pressure, the promotion of professional growth and expansion, added funding, and (occasionally) a perceived need to solve specific problems;

3. Initial Perceptions and Assessments - Teachers and principals saw innovation as hard work, while central office staff saw it as an easy process (Huberman & Miles, 1984);

4. Early Implementation - A good predictor of success of an innovation is whether or not the principal and administrators held out for the fidelity of the implementation (Huberman & Miles, 1984);

5. Assistance - Large scale, change bearing innovations succeeded based upon the amount and quality of assistance that the users received after the innovation was underway (Huberman & Miles, 1984);

6. Transformation - Huberman and Miles (1984) found that transformation was greatest when local administrators maintained the fidelity of the change model and least when the change model was changed to meet the specific perceived needs of the local school; and

7. Change in User Practice - Users of the innovation will typically view any change as being within them. They saw themselves as becoming better practitioners and getting to know their students better (Huberman & Miles, 1984).

The 10 items in DVG-4 are numbered 1 through 10 in Section II of the survey (School Change Processes). An example of these items, related to assistance in implementation, follows (see Appendix):

Item #5, Section II

1 = The success of an innovative change in a school depends on a great deal of assistance from outside of the school

2 = The success of an innovative change in a school depends on some help from outside of the school

3 = The success of an innovative change in a school is internal to the school; success does not depend on any help from outside of the school

It was anticipated that principals in schools that had undergone substantial naturally occurring school improvement would be more likely to mark response number three.

DVG-5

Another set of 16 items was included in the survey based on the work of Ainscow et al. (1994), researchers at Cambridge University who have developed a system for mapping change in UK schools. The 16 items were adapted from a set of 24 items that comprised a scale for measuring a school's internal conditions and potential for innovation. The 16 items were selected for inclusion in the survey as representing the items that would best fit U.S. schools.

Some items were specific to the UK setting (i.e., items referring to UK school organizations that differ from Louisiana elementary schools). Ainscow et al. (1994) described the following "key" conditions within schools that enhance the school's capacity for improvement:

1. Proper attention to the potential benefits of inquiry and reflection;
2. A commitment to collaborative planning;
3. The involvement of staff, students, and the community;
4. A commitment to staff development;
5. Effective coordination strategies; and
6. Leadership at all levels of the school (Ainscow et al., 1994, p. 52). These items were included to

determine whether any differences existed in the principals' perceptions regarding the conditions for change in improving and stable schools.

The first area (Inquiry/Reflection) is represented by the following questions in Section IV (numbers 1 through 3) of the survey, to be answered by choosing one of four possible Likert scale responses ranging from most positive (1) to least positive (4):

1. We talk about the quality of teaching.
2. We review the progress of changes that we introduce.
3. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their teaching methods.

The remaining five areas are represented by items numbered 4 through 16 in Section IV of the survey (see Appendix).

DVG-6

Section III of the survey contained five open-ended items (see Appendix). The first three items asked the principal to consider the last four years at the school and determine whether any new programs have been implemented in the areas of academic programs, discipline programs, and staff development programs. A yes-no response was requested along with directions to describe these programs. A secondary question asked the principal to rate the success of the program.

The fourth item in this section asked whether the central office monitors the school's attempts to improve, and the fifth question asked the principal to describe the impact the community had on change at the school. These questions were then analyzed by using chi-square tests to determine if improving and stable schools differed in their yes-no responses to these items.

Sample

The survey was administered to principals from the entire population of 124 improving schools and 124 stable schools randomly selected from a population of 386 stable schools identified by Freeman (1997), using a table of random numbers (Borg & Gall, 1989).

The principal of the school was designated to complete the survey and return it to the researcher. The sample size for each group was set at +100, which is the recommendation by Sudman (1976) as the minimum sample size for survey research.

Administration of the Survey

Once the sample was selected, a packet was sent to each school containing an individualized cover letter addressed to the principal explaining the study and detailing the instructions for completing the survey. The packet also included a copy of a color-coded survey (white for improving; yellow for stable) (see Appendix) along with a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. The color code was used to

distinguish stable and improving schools, however, the principals were unaware of their particular school designation.

The first mailout took place on May 22, 1995. The overall response rate after the first mailout was 54%. Due to this less than desirable response rate, a second mailout was sent to the schools on July 21, 1995. After the second mailout the response rate increased to 64% (70% for stable schools and 58% for improving schools), which is just below the typical response rate after two mailouts (68%), as reported by Borg and Gall (1989). The second mailout contained the same items as the first mailout, except that the cover letter was revised to indicate that a previous mailout was sent to the principal.

A third mailout was administered on March 11, 1996 in an attempt to increase the overall response rate. Because of the third mailout, the final response rate rose to 69% (73% for stable schools and 65% for improving schools), which is below the typical response rate after three mailouts (79.9%) as reported by Borg and Gall (1989). Nevertheless, the nearly 70% response rate was considered adequate for the purposes of this exploratory study.

Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents

The 170 principals responding to the survey had demographic characteristics as illustrated in Tables 1-6. By gender, the respondents were evenly divided between female (52%) and male (48%). However, by ethnicity, the respondents were overwhelmingly white (76%), with only (21%) African American and (3%) classifying themselves as other race. In relation to the general age of the respondents, only 1% of the principals were between the ages of 25 and 35, while 23% were aged 36-45, 60% were aged 46-55, and 16% were over 56 years of age. Forty-seven percent (47%) of the principals responding were from schools identified as improving, while 53% were from schools identified as stable. The distribution of respondents across community type was 40% in rural-town, 35% in city-urban fringe, and 25% in metropolitan areas. In relation to the SES status of the schools, 32% of the respondents were in low-SES schools, while 68% of the respondents were from mid-SES schools. It should be noted that the distribution of respondents based upon SES status was not affected by the response rate, since SES status was not a consideration in selecting the sample. In other words, the sample did not include 50% from low-SES schools and 50% from mid-SES schools.

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Insert Tables 1-6 about here.

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Statistical Analyses of the Principal Survey Responses

The statistical analyses of the survey data included a series of MANOVA, ANOVA and chi-square analyses. These analyses were conducted to determine if statistically significant differences existed between any of the independent variables (change status, SES status, and community type) and the six dependent variable groups, based on the principals' responses to the survey items.

As stated previously, the dependent variables were broken down into six groups due to the diversity inherent in the survey items taken from a variety of sources. Because of the exploratory nature of the study, there were no a priori hypotheses. The research was guided by the following question:

What context and other variables differentiate between improving and stable schools?

The results for the first five sets of dependent variables were reported as a series of three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs in which the independent variables were the schools' change status, SES status, and community type. A MANOVA was first run for each set of dependent variables. If a significant multivariate effect was found for that variable set, then the univariate ANOVAs for that effect were examined. In a few cases, marginal results were reported ($p < .10$) if the information appeared to further explain an important issue. Since this study was exploratory, it seemed appropriate to relax the standard for avoiding Type I errors to better understand the complex set of relationships that emerged.

DVG-6 was analyzed using chi-square procedures since the data were categorical in nature (frequencies of yes/no responses). In these chi-squares analyses, the frequencies of yes/no responses were crossed by whether schools were improving or stable to determine if there were differences in the response patterns of principals in these two types of schools.

The specific open-ended questions in DVG-6 were as follows:

1. In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new academic programs been implemented in your school? If so, describe the program(s).

2. In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new discipline programs been implemented in your school? If so, describe the program(s).

3. In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new staff development programs been implemented in your school? If so, describe the program(s).

4. Does the central office monitor the results of your attempts to improve your school? Does the central office make efforts to encourage and promote change from within your school? Please explain.

5. (Consider the community to include parents, business organizations, civic organizations, etc.) Has the community had an impact on changes that have been made in the school over the last four years?

Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 1 (DVG-1)

The items in DVG-1 were demographic questions and questions associated with changes in attendance zones, departmentalization of the school, and the presence or absence of a school improvement plan. These variables were analyzed using three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs to determine if differences existed between the school groups in terms of their principals' responses and their general characteristics.

MANOVA results for DVG-1.

The survey data pertaining to DVG-1 were first analyzed using three-way MANOVAs, with change status, SES status, and community type as the independent variables. This analysis revealed significant multivariate effects for change status, [Wilks' lambda =.78, $F(9, 118) = 3.69$, $p < .0005$]; for SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .74, $F(9, 118) = 4.57$, $p < .0001$]; and for community type combined with SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .76, $F(18, 236) = 1.93$, $p < .05$].

Univariate ANOVA results for DVG-1.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect for change status, SES status, and community type combined with SES status, the results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-1 were then examined. These results are contained in Tables 7-10. Only those variables that revealed either a significant main effect or an interaction effect were included in the tables.

Table 7 reveals that there was a significant univariate effect for principal's ethnicity and whether or not the school had engaged in a school-wide improvement project. In terms of principal's ethnicity, a response consisted of 1 = African American, 2 = white, and 3 = other. The mean for improving schools was 1.64, while the mean for stable schools was 1.88. This indicates that both change status categories had more white principals, but the improving schools had a higher percentage of African American principals (36%) than did the stable schools (12%).

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Insert Table 7 about here.

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Also, in Table 7, there was a significant difference between the principal responses from improving and stable schools in relation to whether the school had undertaken a school improvement project within the last four years. A response of 1 = yes, and 2 = no. The mean for improving schools was 1.21, while the mean for stable schools was 1.46. This indicates that more improving schools (46%) had undertaken a school improvement project that was internally generated than had the stable schools (21%), and these plans appear to be having a positive effect on the schools.

Table 8 reveals the significant univariate effects when comparing the schools by SES status. When comparing low-SES and mid-SES schools, there appeared to be a significant difference in terms of principal's ethnicity. When comparing the means for the two categories of schools, the mean for low-SES schools was 1.57, while the mean for mid-SES schools was 1.95. These results indicate that the vast majority of principals in mid-SES schools (95%) were white, while the low-SES schools were almost evenly split between white and African American principals. In other words, African American principals were more likely to be found in low-SES schools rather than mid-SES schools.

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Insert Table 8 about here.

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Table 9 illustrates the results of a series of univariate ANOVAs when the independent variables, community type and SES status are combined. This further divided the schools into six categories: low-SES, rural/town; low-SES, city/urban fringe; low-SES, metropolitan; mid-SES, rural/town; mid-SES, city/urban fringe; and mid-SES, metropolitan.

By examining the means for principal ethnicity across these six categories, it is apparent that the vast majority of African American principals (65%) were found in low-SES, metropolitan schools. The mean for mid-SES, metropolitan schools indicated that almost all principals were white. Interestingly, the number of African American principals decreased from low-SES, metropolitan to low-SES, city/urban fringe to low-SES, rural, but the results were somewhat inverted in the three categories of mid-SES schools. This means that while there were more African American principals in low-SES, metropolitan schools than in low-SES, rural schools, there were fewer African American principals in mid-SES, metropolitan schools than in mid-SES, rural schools.

Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 2 (DVG-2)

The items in DVG-2 included school-level data obtained from the LDE, such as student population, percentage of teachers possessing a master's degree, student attendance, and student suspensions and expulsions. These variables were analyzed using three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs to determine if differences existed between the school groups in terms of their general characteristics.

MANOVA results for DVG-2.

The survey data pertaining to DVG-2 were first analyzed using three-way MANOVAs, with change status, SES status, and community type as the independent variables. This analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect for change status, [Wilks' lambda = .91, $F(9, 149) = 1.69$, $p < .10$]; for SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .82, $F(9, 149) = 3.73$, $p < .0005$]; for community type, [Wilks' lambda = .82,

$F(18, 298) = 1.75$, $p < .05$]; for change status combined with SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .89, $F(9, 149) = 1.99$, $p < .05$]; and for community type combined with SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .82, $F(18, 298) = 1.70$, $p < .05$].

Univariate ANOVA results for DVG-2.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect in the specified cases, the results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-2 were then examined. These results are detailed in Tables 11-13. Only those variables that revealed either a significant main effect or an interaction effect were included in the tables.

Table 11 illustrates the variables within DVG-2 that received significantly different responses based on SES status. Not surprisingly, the percentage of teachers possessing at least a Master's degree was greater in mid-SES schools. This is consistent with the research literature (Frantz, 1994) that suggests that low-SES schools, particularly inner-city schools have a higher percentage of inexperienced teachers due to the fact that most school districts have a policy that allows transfer requests based on seniority. Those teachers with the most seniority, which usually includes those with advanced degrees, usually opt for the more affluent suburban schools.

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Insert Table 11 about here.

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The results regarding the variables student attendance, suspensions, and expulsions are also consistent with the literature regarding the context variable, SES. Attendance is lower in low-SES schools, while suspensions and expulsions are higher in low-SES schools. However, caution should be taken regarding suspensions and expulsions, since the policy regarding discipline varies greatly from district to district, with many districts opting not to include expulsion as a method of discipline in elementary schools.

Table 12 indicates that when schools are compared by community type, the only variable in DVG-2 that demonstrated a significant difference was the percentage of teachers with at least a Master's degree. The mean percentages increased from rural to metropolitan community types, which may be explained by the fact that teachers in the metropolitan areas have more access to universities to pursue advanced degrees.

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Insert Table 12 about here.

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Table 13 combines change status with SES status. The only variable in DVG-2 that showed a significant difference was expulsions. Schools categorized as low-SES, improving had the highest percentage of expulsions by far. This may indicate that the low-SES environment would preclude more disciplinary problems, and by removing the more severe disciplinary problems through expulsions, the school would begin to improve. This would be consistent with the behavior of a principal in LSES-III and LSES-IV, referred to as tighten up, lighten up (Teddlie & Stringfield, 1993). However, again, the great amount of variance in the percentage of expulsions may be due to differences in district discipline policies.

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Insert Table 13 about here.

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Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 3 (DVG-3)

The items in DVG-3 included three survey items that asked the principals to respond to the areas in which their school was engaged in site-based management. These variables were analyzed using three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs to determine if differences existed between the school groups in terms of their responses.

MANOVA results for DVG-3.

The survey data pertaining to DVG-3 were first analyzed using three-way MANOVAs, with change status, SES status, and community type as the independent variables. This analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect for SES status, [Wilks' lambda = .87, $F(3, 153) = 7.31$, $p < .0001$].

Univariate ANOVA results for DVG-3.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect for SES status, the results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-3 were then examined. These results are contained in Table 14. Only those variables that revealed either a significant main effect or an interaction effect were included in the table.

Table 14 reveals that the only significant difference between variables in DVG-3 was the principal's responses to Part A of the site-based management item concerning the principal's leadership style and its facilitation of shared decision making among the faculty. The responses to this item were on a four-point Likert scale with 1 = always and 4 = never. The means for this variable (low-SES - 1.54, and mid-SES - 1.87) indicated that the low-SES schools are more likely to have a principal with a leadership style that encourages shared decision making. It should be noted that these responses are on the positive end of the scale, perhaps reflecting socially desirable responses.

Insert Table 14 about here.

Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 4 (DVG-4)

The items in DVG-4 included questions related to the processes of change taking place in the principal's particular school. These data were analyzed using three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs to determine if differences existed between the school groups in terms of their general characteristics.

MANOVA results for DVG-4.

The survey data pertaining to DVG-4 were first analyzed using three-way MANOVAs, with change status, SES status, and community type as the independent variables. This analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect for community type, [Wilks' lambda = .77, $F(20, 276) = 1.88$, $p < .05$]; and for change status combined with community type, [Wilks' lambda = .82, $F(20, 276) = 1.45$, $p < .10$].

Univariate ANOVA results for DVG-4.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect with regard to community type and change status combined with community type, the results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-4 were then examined. These results are contained in Tables 15 and 16. Only those variables that revealed either a significant main effect or an interaction effect were included in the tables.

Table 15 indicates that the principal's response to the items identified as ChgPro7 and ChgPro 8 are significantly different when contrasted across schools based on community type. ChgPro7 included a list of three statements concerning the goal of school change. A response of 1 was the most desirable response in relation to the presence of an environment suited to accept change. More of the rural/town and city/urban fringe schools indicated that the goal of change is to make school a better place for children to learn. More metropolitan schools indicated that the goal of change should be to improve schools and to improve the professionalism of the teachers and administrators.

Insert Table 15 about here.

With ChgPro8, 1 represents the least desirable response and 3 represents the most desirable response. Again, rural/town and city/urban fringe schools were more likely to select the most desirable response, which stated that teachers could make a great deal of difference in the effectiveness of the school.

Table 16 reveals that when community type is combined with change status, the dependent variables in DVG-4 that emerge as having responses that are significantly different are ChgPro3 and ChgPro9. These are 2 of 16 items that were used in the principal's survey to indicate what change processes take place in schools.

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Insert Table 16 about here.

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ChgPro3 asked the principals to indicate whether they felt that the process of change involved a great deal of hard work (1) to the process is very easy (4). The most desirable answer was the first, and the stable, rural/town schools provided the most desirable response on average. The stable, metropolitan schools provided the least desirable response on average. ChgPro9 provided a list of four possible responses related to the structure of instruction in the school. The responses could range from, instruction is very structured in my school, with no deviation in the schedule allowed (1) to instruction is very flexible and teaching innovations are strongly encouraged (4). On this item, a response of 4 was considered to be the most desirable response, while a response of 1 was considered to be the least desirable response. The results were the opposite of the responses in ChgPro3. In this particular case, stable, rural/town schools provided the least desirable responses, while the stable, metropolitan schools provided the most desirable responses.

It is interesting that the stable, rural and improving, metropolitan schools described their schools as having the most structured instruction. This probably occurs for very different reasons: instruction may be more structured in rural, stable schools because community members are happy with that; instruction may be more structured in metropolitan, improving schools because that approach is necessary for the first phase of improvement to occur.

Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 5 (DVG-5)

The items in DVG-5 included questions related to the principal's perceptions of how change takes place in their particular school. These data were analyzed using three-way MANOVAs and ANOVAs to determine if differences existed between the school groups in terms of their responses.

MANOVA results for DVG-5.

The survey data pertaining to DVG-5 were first analyzed using three-way MANOVAs, with change status, SES status, and community type as the independent variables. This analysis revealed a significant multivariate effect for community type, [Wilks' lambda = .68, $F(32, 262) = 1.76$, $p < .01$].

Univariate ANOVA results for DVG-5.

Since the MANOVA results indicated a significant effect for community type, the results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-5 were then examined. These results were included in Table 17. Only those variables that revealed either a significant main effect or an interaction effect were included in the tables.

Table 17 indicates that the only variables in DVG-5 that had responses that were significantly different across community type were ChgPer7, ChgPer10, and ChgPer11. Each of these items consisted of a statement regarding the principal's of school change processes. Each item required a response ranging from nearly always (1) to rarely (4). For each of these three items, a response of 1 was the most desirable and 4 was the least desirable.

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Insert Table 17 about here.

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ChgPer7 stated that parents' opinions are taken into consideration when curricular changes are made. In this case, the means reported in Table 17 indicated that the metropolitan schools were the most likely to provide the most desirable response. Metropolitan schools were also the most likely to respond in the most desirable manner for items ChgPer10 and ChgPer11. ChgPer10 stated that professional learning and staff development are emphasized when devising plans for school change. ChgPer11 stated that the school calendar includes adequate time for professional development. The results in DVG-5 could indicate that metropolitan principals are more familiar with the latest trends in education.

Analysis of Dependent Variable Group 6 (DVG-6)

The five open-ended questions contained in the principal's survey were grouped together as DVG-6. Since these responses were in the form of yes-no answers, the frequencies of yes-no answers for each question were separated by improving and stable schools. Chi-square tests were used to analyze these responses for the purpose of determining whether there were any differences in the response patterns between improving and stable schools. Table 18 shows the frequencies of responses for all five questions.

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Insert Table 18 about here.

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Chi-square test results indicated that there were significant differences in the frequency of yes/no responses between improving and stable schools, for questions 3 and 4. For question 3, (In the past four



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years [or in the time that you have been at the school] have any new staff development programs been implemented in your school? If so, describe the program(s).), 65 (87%) improving schools responded yes, while 60 (73%) stable schools responded yes, indicating a greater frequency of staff development programs initiated internally over the past four years. For question 4, (Does the central office monitor the results of your attempts to improve your school? Does the central office make efforts to encourage and promote change from within your school? Please explain.), 71 (90%) improving schools responded yes, while 67 (80%) stable schools responded yes, indicating a greater frequency in improving schools regarding district encouragement of internally initiated programs.

## Summary of Results

Results from the analyses of DVG-1 through DVG-6.

The results of the three-way MANOVA conducted on DVG-1 revealed significant multivariate effects for change status, for SES status, and for community type combined with SES status. The most interesting of these significant results were:

1. Principal's ethnicity and change status (there was a higher percentage of African American principals in improving schools than African American principals in stable schools)

2. Principal's ethnicity and SES status of the school (mid-SES schools had 95% white principals, while low-SES schools were evenly split between white and African American)

3. Principal's ethnicity and SES status combined with community type (there are more African American principals in low-SES, metropolitan schools than in low, SES, rural schools; there are fewer African American principals in mid-SES, metropolitan schools than in mid-SES, rural schools)

The items in DVG-2 revealed a significant multivariate effect for change status, for SES status, for community type, for change status combined with SES status, and for community type combined with SES status. The most interesting of these results were:

1. The ANOVA results for DVG-2 based on SES status indicate that the percentage of teachers possessing at least a Master's degree, student attendance, suspensions, and expulsions were all greater in mid-SES schools.

2. When combining change status and SES status, the only variable in DVG-2 that showed a significant difference was expulsions. The low-SES, improving schools had the highest suspension rates indicating that these schools may be engaged in tactics designed to restore order to the learning environment by using suspensions as a disciplinary method.

The MANOVA analysis for DVG-3 revealed a significant multivariate effect for SES status. The results of the univariate ANOVAs for DVG-3 revealed that the only significant difference among

variables in DVG-3 was in regard to the principal's responses to the item regarding site-based management as it relates to the principal's leadership style and facilitation of shared decision making among the faculty. The interesting result in DVG-3 was that low-SES principals' responses were significantly higher than mid-SES principals to this item. This is contrary to the literature that indicates that shared decision making is more likely to occur in mid-SES schools.

The MANOVA analysis of DVG-4 revealed a significant multivariate effect for community type and for change status combined with community type. The most interesting results in DVG-4 in reference to community type were:

1. More rural/town and city/urban fringe schools indicated that the goal of change is to make school a better place for children to learn (most desirable response), while more metropolitan schools indicated that the goal of change should be to improve schools and to improve the professionalism of the teachers and administrators.

2. Rural/town and city/urban fringe were more likely to respond that teachers could make a great deal of difference in the effectiveness of the school (most desirable response)..

When community type is combined with change status, the most interesting results were:

1. Stable, rural/town schools responded that change in schools requires a great deal of hard work (most desirable response), while stable, metropolitan schools provided the least desirable response.

2. Stable, metropolitan schools provided the most desirable response to the item related to the structure of instruction in the school, i.e., instruction is very flexible and teaching innovations are strongly encouraged while stable, rural schools provided the least desirable response.

The MANOVA results for DVG-5 indicated that the only variables in DVG-5 that some item responses were significantly different across community type. The most interesting results from this analysis were:

1. Metropolitan schools provided the most desirable response to the item that stated that parent's opinions are taken into consideration when curricular changes are made.

2. Metropolitan schools provided the most desirable response to an item that stated that professional learning and staff development are emphasized when devising plans for school change.

3. Metropolitan schools provided the most desirable response to an item that stated the school calendar includes adequate time for professional development.

The five open-ended questions contained in the principal's survey were grouped together as DVG-6. Chi-square results indicated that there were significant differences in the frequency of yes/no responses between improving and stable schools for two questions.

In response to the question, "In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new staff development programs been implemented in your school? If so, describe the program(s)," 87% of the improving schools responded yes, while 73% of the stable schools responded yes, indicating a greater frequency of staff development programs initiated internally over the past four years in improving schools.

For the question, "Does the central office monitor the results of your attempts to improve your school? Does the central office make efforts to encourage and promote change from within your school?" 90% of the improving schools responded yes, while 80% of the stable schools responded yes, indicating a greater frequency in improving schools of district encouragement of internally initiated programs.

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Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (Principal's Gender)

| Female | Male |
|---|---|
| 88 (51.8%) | 82 (48.2%) |

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (Principal's Ethnicity)

| African American | White | Other |
|---|---|---|
| 32 (21.2%) | 115 (76.2%) | 4 (2.6%) |

Table 3
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (Principal's Age)

| 25-35 | 36-45 | 46-55 | +56 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 (1.2%) | 39 (23.4%) | 100 (59.9%) | 26 (15.6%) |

Table 4
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (School Change Status)

| Improving | Stable |
|---|---|
| 79 (46.5%) | 91 (53.5%) |

Table 5
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (School Community Type)

| Rural-Town | City-Urban Fringe | Metropolitan |
|---|---|---|
| 68 (40.0%) | 59 (34.7%) | 43 (25.3%) |

Table 6
Demographic Characteristics of Survey Respondents (School SES Status)

| Low-SES | Mid-SES |
|---|---|
| 55 (32.4%) | 115 (67.6%) |

Table 7
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-1; Independent Variable = Change Status

| Variable | df | F | p | Improving Mean | Stable Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal's Ethnicity | 1, 126 | 10.2 | <.005 | 1.64 | 1.88 |
| School Improvement Plan | 1, 126 | 7.23 | <.01 | 1.21 | 1.46 |

Table 8
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-1; Independent Variable = SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | Low-SES | Mid-SES |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal's Ethnicity | 1, 126 | 26.01 | <.0001 | 1.57 | 1.95 |

Table 9
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-1; Independent Variable = Community Type by SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | LR | LC | LM | MR | MC | MM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal's Ethnicity | 2, 126 | 2.7 | <.10 | 1.75 | 1.65 | 1.35 | 1.94 | 1.89 | 2.05 |

Note: LR = Low-SES, Rural/Town; LC = Low-SES, City/Urban Fringe; LM = Low-SES, Metropolitan; MR = Mid-SES, Rural/Town; MC = Mid-SES, City/Urban Fringe; MM = Mid-SES, Metropolitan.

Table 10
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-1; Independent Variable = Community Type by SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | LR | LC | LM | MR | MC | MM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Principal's Ethnicity | 2, 126 | 2.7 | <.10 | 1.75 | 1.65 | 1.35 | 1.94 | 1.89 | 2.05 |

Note: LR = Low-SES, Rural/Town; LC = Low-SES, City/Urban Fringe; LM = Low-SES, Metropolitan; MR = Mid-SES, Rural/Town; MC = Mid-SES, City/Urban Fringe; MM = Mid-SES, Metropolitan.

Table 11
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-2; Independent Variable = SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | Low-SES Mean | Mid-SES Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage Masters' Degree | 1, 157 | 3.82 | <.10 | 38.98% | 43.48% |
| Attendance | 1, 157 | 20.65 | <.10 | 94.59% | 95.69% |
| Suspensions | 1, 157 | 7.50 | <.10 | 3.69% | 2.25% |
| Expulsions | 1, 157 | 6.04 | <.05 | .13% | .04% |

Table 12
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-2; Independent Variable = Community Type

| Variable | df | F | p | Rural Mean | City Mean | Metropolitan Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pct. Master's | 2, 157 | 5.11 | <.01 | 38.01% | 39.13% | 46.55% |

Table 13
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-2; Independent Variable = Change Status Combined with SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | LI Mean | LS Mean | MI Mean | MS Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expulsion | 1, 157 | 7.47 | <.01 | .21% | .02% | .06% | .07% |

Note: LI = Low-SES, Improving; LS = Low-SES, Stable; MI = Mid-SES, Improving; and MS = Mid-SES, Stable.

Table 14
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-3; Independent Variable = SES Status

| Variable | df | F | p | Low-SES Mean | Mid-SES Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SBMGTA | 1, 155 | 19.71 | <.0001 | 1.54 | 1.87 |

Table 15
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-4; Independent Variable = Community Type

| Variable | df | F | p | Rural Mean | City Mean | Met. Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ChgPro7 | 2, 147 | 5.24 | <.01 | 1.13 | 1.14 | 1.44 |
| ChgPro8 | 2, 147 | 5.09 | <.01 | 2.82 | 2.80 | 2.53 |

Table 16
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-4; Independent Variable = Community Type Combined with Change Status

| Variable | df | F | p | IR | IC | IM | SR | SC | SM |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ChgPro3 | 2, 147 | 2.38 | <.10 | 1.77 | 1.97 | 1.70 | 1.45 | 1.85 | 2.06 |
| ChgPro9 | 2, 147 | 3.99 | <.05 | 3.21 | 3.28 | 2.94 | 2.86 | 3.06 | 3.68 |

Note: IR = Improving, Rural/Town; IC = Improving, City/Urban Fringe; IM = Improving, Metropolitan; SR = Stable, Rural/Town; SC = Stable, City/Urban Fringe; SM = Stable, Metropolitan.

Table 17
Significant Univariate ANOVA Values for DVG-5; Independent Variable = Community Type

| Variable | df | F | p | Rural Mean | City Mean | Met. Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ChgPer7 | 2, 146 | 2.99 | <.10 | 2.02 | 2.16 | 1.69 |
| ChgPer10 | 2, 146 | 3.30 | <.05 | 1.81 | 1.78 | 1.47 |
| ChgPer11 | 2, 146 | 4.12 | <.05 | 2.62 | 3.05 | 2.39 |

Table 18
Frequency Distribution of Yes-No Responses to Five Questions in DVG-6

| | Improving Schools | | | | Stable Schools | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Question # | Yes | No | NR | Pct.Yes | Yes | No | NR | Pct.Yes |
| 1 | 67 | 10 | 2 | 87% | 72 | 12 | 5 | 86% |
| 2 | 59 | 18 | 2 | 77% | 60 | 25 | 5 | 71% |
| 3* | 65 | 10 | 4 | 87% | 60 | 22 | 7 | 73% |
| 4* | 71 | 8 | 0 | 90% | 67 | 17 | 5 | 80% |
| 5 | 74 | 2 | 3 | 97% | 80 | 3 | 6 | 96% |

Note: * Indicates that there was a significant difference in the frequency of responses between improving and stable schools.

# APPENDIX

## SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SURVEY

**I. Background Information.**

Please provide the following information concerning **you** and **your school** by checking the appropriate response or writing in the appropriate answer where requested:

**A) Principal Information:**

(1) **Gender**:_____ Female _____ Male.

(2) **Ethnicity**: _____ Black _____ White _____ Other.

(3) **Age**: _____ 25-35 _____ 36-45 _____ 46-55 _____ Over 55.

**B) School Information:**

(4) **School Name**_____

(5) Number of years as principal AT THIS SCHOOL ____. Total years as a principal ____.

(6) Number of **new** faculty members AT THIS SCHOOL during ____ 1994-95 ____ 93-94 _____ 92-93 _____ 91-92 (Leave a school year blank only if you were not at the school during that year and you do not have access to this information).

(7) Has the student attendance zone at this school changed significantly during the past four years (or during the time that you have principal)? _____ Yes _____ No. If **yes**, what caused this change?

(8) Is your school departmentalized? _____ Yes _____ No. If **yes**, for what subject areas?

(9) Site-based management can involve school-site control in three areas: leadership; curriculum; and budget. Given this general description, please check the most appropriate response:

(A) As principal, my leadership style provides the faculty and staff an opportunity to share the decision-making responsibilities through building level committees:

_____ Always _____ Almost Always _____ Almost Never _____ Never.

(B) Decisions regarding what teachers teach and how they teach it are made within the school:

_____ Always _____ Almost Always _____ Almost Never _____ Never.

(C) Budget decisions are made within the school:

_____ Always _____ Almost Always _____ Almost Never _____ Never.

(10) During the past four years, has your school participated in a school improvement program that originated from outside of your school? _____ Yes _____ No. If **yes**, briefly name and describe these programs and specify where they originated.



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**II. School Change Processes**

**Think about the process of school change as you consider the following descriptions. Check one response for each item that <u>best</u> describes your perceptions of those processes. (Mark ONE response per item)**

(1) In my school, ideas for innovative change originate with

_____ the **state department**.

_____ the **district central office staff**.

_____ **parent groups**.

_____ the **principal and assistant principal(s)**.

_____ **teacher committees or individual teachers**.

(2) In my school, processes for school change are implemented

_____ to meet state department guidelines and mandates.

_____ to meet central office directives.

_____ to satisfy a perceived need from within the community.

_____ to address a specific problem within the school.

(3) I perceive the process of implementing innovative change as

_____ involving **a great deal of hard work**.

_____ involving **some** hard work.

_____ **being relatively easy work**.

_____ **being a very easy process**.

(4) The best indicator of long term success for an innovative change is the degree of dedication shown by those involved in implementing the change.

_____ Strongly agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly disagree

(5) ____ The success of an innovative change in a school depends on a **great deal** of assistance from outside of the school.

____ The success of an innovative change in a school depends on **some help** from outside of the school.

____ The success of an innovative change in a school is internal to the school; success does not depend on **any help** from outside of the school.



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(6) ____ The success of an innovative change depends on selecting a change model and **never deviating** from that model.

____ The success of an innovative change depends on selecting a change model and **adapting it to fit your individual school needs**.

____ The success of an innovative change depends on **developing a change model that is appropriate for a particular school and then adjusting the model as the need arises**.

(7) ____ The goal of school change is to make the school a better place for children to learn.

____ The goal of school change is to improve schools and to improve the professionalism of the teachers and administrators of the school.

____ The goal of school change is to improve the professional skills of teachers and administrators.

(8) ____ Teachers in my school feel that they **cannot make a difference** in the effectiveness of the school.

____ Teachers in my school feel that they **can make some difference** in the effectiveness of the school.

____ Teachers in my school feel that they **can make a great deal of difference** in the effectiveness of the school.

(9) ____ Instruction in my school is very structured with no deviation in the schedule allowed (i.e.,tightly following state curriculum guides).

____ Instruction in my school is somewhat structured with some deviation from the norm.

____ Instruction in my school is very flexible and allows for innovations to be attempted.

____ Instruction in my school is flexible and teaching innovations are strongly encouraged.

(10) School-wide standardized test scores are the best indicators of how well a school is performing.

_____ Strongly agree _____ Agree _____ Disagree _____ Strongly disagree



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**III. Open-ended responses.**

Please respond in detail to the following questions.

(1) In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new ACADEMIC PROGRAMS been implemented in your school? If so, briefly describe the program(s).

What is your assessment of the success of these ACADEMIC PROGRAMS to date?

(2) In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new DISCIPLINE PROGRAMS been implemented in your school? If so, briefly describe the program(s).

What is your assessment of the new DISCIPLINE PROGRAM(S) to date?

(3) In the past four years (or in the time that you have been at the school) have any new STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS implemented in your school? If so, briefly describe the program(s).

What is your assessment of the new STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM(S) to date?

(4) Does the central office monitor the results of your attempts to improve your school? Does the central office make efforts to encourage and promote change from within your school? Please explain.

(5) (Consider the COMMUNITY to include parents, business organizations, civic organizations, etc.) What impact has the COMMUNITY had on changes that have been made in the school over the last four years?

**IV. Perceptual Responses to the Processes of School Change.**



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Please check **one** response for each item that indicates your perceptions of how change takes place in **your** school.

(1) We talk about the quality of teaching.

____ Very Often ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(2) We review the progress of changes that we introduce.

____ Very Often ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(3) Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their teaching methods.

____ Very Often ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(4) Our long-term goals are reflected in **written** school plans.

____ Very Often ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(5) The **process** of planning is regarded as being more important than the plan.

____ Always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(6) The school's improvement priorities are communicated to the entire faculty and staff.

____ Always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(7) We take parents' opinions into consideration when curricular changes are made.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(8) Staff members from the school and the central office work as a team to determine goals for the school.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(9) We utilize outside consultants for staff and program development.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(10) Professional learning and staff development are emphasized when devising plans for school change.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(11) The school calendar includes adequate time for professional development.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(12) Collaboration among teachers is emphasized at this school.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(13) The faculty is kept informed concerning key administrative decisions.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(14) Class time is provided for teaching test taking skills

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely



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(15) The teachers and administrators at this school have a clear vision of where they are going.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely

(16) Teachers are given opportunities to assume leadership roles, such as establishing a school-wide discipline policy.

____ Nearly always ____ Often ____ Sometimes ____ Rarely